



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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ICE AGENTS SEIZE MORE THAN 60K OF COCAINE AND 2LBS. OF HEROIN IN EASTERN PUERTO RICO

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico— U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents seized over 60 kilograms of cocaine and 2.2 pounds of heroin last night in the municipality of Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

Kelly Malla, a 38 year-old male from St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands and Yahaira Cabrera Pinales, 33, and Benito Santiago de la Rosa, 42, from the Dominican Republic were arrested here last night when ICE agents found approximately 41 kilograms of cocaine and .25 pounds of heroin concealed in one of the compartments of their homemade 21-foot boat.

On Aug. 11, 2005, during a routine patrol mission in eastern Puerto Rico, a U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious vessel near the island of Culebra, Puerto Rico and alerted marine enforcement officers and ICE agents in Fajardo that a boat that met the profile of those carrying contraband was about five nautical miles from the small island off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico.

CBP marine enforcement officers were launched to intercept the vessel for a routine inspection; however, the crew of the boat displayed suspicious behavior prompting the officers to escort the boat to the port of Fajardo where ICE agents, after given consent to search the boat, found the contraband in a tool box.

“Those who think that Puerto Rico is a free way to bring drugs into the United States are mistaken,” said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent in charge of ICE investigations. “ICE, our partners in the Department of Homeland Security, state and local law enforcement agencies will continue our efforts to keep drugs from being smuggled to our country through Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands.”

In a similar incident, ICE agents arrested 34 year-old Daniel Colon Santiago in Fajardo, Puerto Rico last night after a narcotics detection dog (K-9) alerted positive to drugs in Colon-Santiago’s boat. After ICE agents were given consent to search the vessel they found approximately 20 kilograms of cocaine and 2 pounds of heroin concealed in a hidden compartment of the boat.

Kelly Malla, Yahaira Cabrera Pinales, Benito Santiago de la Rosa and Daniel Colon Santiago are in U.S. Marshals custody and were taken before a U.S. Magistrate Judge for formal charges.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.